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1999 World Trade Organization Ministerial to be Held in Seattle

Representatives of the 133-member countries of the World Trade Organization will meet in Seattle, Washington for the 1999 WTO Ministerial Conference Meeting, which will take place November 30th through December 3rd, 1999. This meeting will be chaired by United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, and it will launch global negotiations to further open markets in goods, services, and agricultural trade.

“This will be the largest trade event ever held in the United States,” said United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, “and it will inaugurate global negotiations which will shape world trade as we move to the next century. President Clinton has called for a new, accelerated negotiating Round to include three different dimensions: global negotiations to open markets in goods, services, and agriculture; a dynamic agenda that delivers results on an on-going basis; and institutional reform to make the WTO more transparent, accessible, and responsive to citizens.”

Initially, over 40 U.S. cities expressed an interest in hosting the Ministerial meeting. Seattle, Washington was selected by the Administration as the U.S. site to host the conference among six finalist cities. Among the factors considered in making the selection were capacity and ability to host, security arrangements, proximity of convention facility to hotels, proximity to an international airport, local transportation, logistics, and offers of assistance from the city, the state, and the private sector. The final selection was based on the total package of considerations, rather than on any single criterion.